

CLAIMS

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1. A notification method in a computer database system comprising:
- receiving a notification instruction from an owner associated with a search listing stored in the computer database system;
- monitoring conditions specified by the notification instruction for the search listing; and
- sending a notification to the owner upon detection of a changed condition of the search listing.
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2. The notification method of claim 1 wherein receiving the notification instruction comprises:
- receiving identification information for one or more search listings for which the associated owner desires a notification.
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3. The notification method of claim 2 wherein receiving the identification information comprises:
- receiving identification information for notification about a change in position among search results for the search listing when the search listing is referred with other search listings forming the search results to a searcher in response to a search query from the searcher.
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4. The notification method of claim 2 wherein receiving the identification information comprises:
- receiving identification information for notification about a value of cost per clickthrough for the search listing, the cost per clickthrough being an economic value payable by the owner when the search listing is referred to a searcher in response to a search query from the searcher.
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5. The notification method of claim 2 wherein receiving the identification information comprises:
receiving identification information for notification about an account balance for an account associated with the advertiser.
6. The notification method of claim 2 wherein receiving the identification information comprises:
receiving identification information for notification about aggregate impressions for identified search listings.
7. The notification method of claim 2 wherein receiving the identification information comprises:
receiving identification information for notification about aggregate clickthroughs for identified search listings.
8. The notification method of claim 2 wherein receiving the identification information comprises:
receiving identification information for notification about aggregate clickthrough rate for identified search listings.
9. The notification method of claim 2 wherein receiving the identification information comprises:
receiving identification information for notification about search listings having a cost per clickthrough which is reducible without affecting an advertiser specified display rank among search results when the search listing is referred among search results to a searcher in response to a search query from the searcher.
10. The notification method of claim 2 wherein receiving the identification information comprises:

receiving identification information including a specified cost per clickthrough and a specified display rank for notification when the identified search listings can be at the specified display rank among search results presented to a searcher in response to a search query from the search for less than the specified cost per clickthrough.

11. The notification method of claim 2 wherein receiving the identification information comprises:

receiving identification information about an average cost per clickthrough for two or more search listings.

12. The notification method of claim 1 wherein receiving the notification instruction comprises:

receiving information defining notification times for sending the notification.

13. The notification method of claim 12 wherein receiving information defining notification times comprises one of:

receiving identification of search listings for sending an immediate notification, and

receiving identification of search listings for sending an interval notification.

14. The notification method of claim 1 wherein receiving the notification instruction comprises:

receiving an indication of a notification mode.

15. The notification method of claim 14 wherein the notification mode is selected from the group including: electronic mail, instant messaging, facsimile, paging and telephone voice call.

16. The notification method of claim 1 wherein receiving the notification instruction comprises:

receiving an indication of one or more action types to include with the notification.

17. The notification method of claim 16 wherein the one or more action types are selected from the group including: active links in a message, inactive links in a message, electronic mail, phone, auto-correct and relax.

18. The notification method of claim 1 wherein sending the notification comprises:

sending at least one of an electronic mail notification, an active link notification embedded in a message and an inactive link notification embedded in a message.

19. The notification method of claim 18 wherein sending the notification comprises sending the notification in accordance with the notification instruction.

20. The notification method of claim 1 wherein sending the notification comprises:

sending at least one of a telephone notification, an instant messaging notification, a facsimile notification and a page.

21. The notification method of claim 1 further comprising: receiving an advertiser action instruction in response to the notification; and

automatically adjusting at least one of a cost per click and display rank for the search listing according to the advertiser action

instruction, the display rank for the listing defining position of the search listing among search results when the search listing is referred to a searcher in response to a search query from the searcher, the cost per click being an economic value payable by the owner when the search listing is referred to a searcher in response to a search query from the searcher.

22. The notification method of claim 1 further comprising: receiving an advertiser action instruction in response to the notification; and automatically replenishing a balance of an account associated with the owner.

23. The notification method of claim 1 further comprising: receiving an advertiser action instruction in response to the notification; and automatically relaxing one or more constraints created by the conditions specified in the notification instruction.

24. The notification method of claim 1 further comprising: automatically depositing funds in an account associated with the advertiser in response to an account balance too low condition.

25. The notification method of claim 1 further comprising: automatically adjusting at least one of a cost per click and display rank for the search listing, the display rank for the listing defining position of the search listing among search results when the search listing is referred to a searcher in response to a search query from the searcher, the bid amount being an economic value payable by the owner when the search listing

is referred to a searcher in response to a search query from the searcher.

5 26. A database search system comprising a database of search listings associated with advertisers and a processing system which sends a notification to an advertiser when a change condition of a search listing of the advertiser has occurred.

10 27. A database search system comprising:
a database of search listings, each search listing being associated with an advertiser;
a search engine; and
means responsive to condition specifying information from one or more advertisers for providing an indication to an advertiser when a specified condition of one or more search listings is satisfied.

15 28. A database search system comprising:
a database of search listings, each search listing being associated with a respective advertiser, each search listing including a search term and at least one of a variable cost per click (CPC) and a variable display rank;
20 a search engine configured to identify search listings matching a search query received from a searcher, the matching search listings being ordered in a search result list according to the at least one of the display rank and the bid amount of the matching search listings; and
25 an agent responsive to a condition definition from an advertiser to provide condition update information to the advertiser.

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29. The database search system of claim 28 wherein the agent is configured to receive as the condition definition an indication of search listings and indication of CPC range, and wherein the agent is configured to provide as the condition update information a notification that CPC for the indicated search listings has reached the indicated CPC range.

30. The database search system of claim 28 wherein the agent is configured to receive as the condition definition an indication of search listings and indication of desired rank, and wherein the agent is configured to provide as the condition update information a notification that display rank for the indicated search listings has reached the indicated desired rank.

31. The database search system of claim 28 further comprising an advertiser account management device and wherein the agent is configured to receive as the condition definition an indication of a minimum account balance.

32. The database search system of claim 28 further comprising an advertiser account management device configured to count impressions for specified search listings and wherein the agent is configured to receive as the condition definition an indication of impression-counted search listings and an associated impression limit.

33. The database search system of claim 28 further comprising an advertiser account management device configured to count clicks for specified search listings and wherein the agent is configured to receive as the condition definition an indication of click-counted search listings and an associated click limit.

34. The database search system of claim 28 further comprising an advertiser account management device configured to measure a clickthrough rate for specified search listings and wherein the agent is configured to receive as the condition definition an indication of clickthrough rate search listings and an associated clickthrough rate limit.

35. The database search system of claim 34 wherein the associated clickthrough rate comprises an aggregate clickthrough rate for a combination of the clickthrough rate search listings.

36. The database search system of claim 28 further comprising an advertiser account management device configured to measure an average cost per clickthrough for specified search listings and wherein the agent is configured to receive as the condition definition an indication of average cost per clickthrough search listings and an associated average cost per clickthrough limit.

37. The database search system of claim 28 wherein the agent is configured to receive as the condition definition an indication of the minimum CPC required to attain a given display rank for a search term.

38. A method for operating a database search system, the method comprising:

storing a plurality of search listings in a database, each search listing being associated with an advertiser who gives economic value when a search listing is referred to a searcher;

determining a display position for associated search listings; and receiving from an advertiser an indication of search listings for which the advertiser desires a notification of a display position change.

39. The method of claim 38 further comprising:
receiving from two or more advertisers positioning information for
search listings associated with the two or more advertisers;
and
in response to the positioning information, determining the display
position.

40. The method of claim 39 wherein receiving the positioning
information comprises:
receiving at least one of one of a cost per click and a desired rank
for the associated search listings.